

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

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P R 282130Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7955

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAN SALVADOR 1632

E.O. 11652 -GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, PGOV, ES, HO, PBOR

SUBJECT: FURTHER REACTIONS TO HONDURAN SITUATION

1. IN COURSE OF APRIL 25 CALL ON BORGONOVO TO DISCUSS UPCOMING OAS MEETING, AMBASSADOR RAISED SUBJECT OF NEW CABINET IN HONDURAS BY PRESENTING SUMMARY OF OUR EMBASSY'S PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT, AND ASKING FONMIN'S IMPRESSIONS OF CABINET AND HOW THINGS WERE GOING IN GENERAL.

2. BORGONOVO BEGAN BY SAING HE KNEW THE NEW HONDURAN FONMIN WELL, SINCE GALVEZ HAD BEEN AN ACTIVE PARTICIPANT IN THE PREVIOUS NEGOTIATIONS WITH BARTRES. BORGONOVO CHARACTERIZED GALVEZ AS AN INDIVIDUAL WHO IS INTIMATELY ACQUAINTED WITH ALL ASPECTS OF THE PROBLEM AND DISCUSSIONS TO DATE. THE FONMIN SAID HE HAD ALSO READ PRESS REPORTS THAT BATRES HIMSELF HAD BEEN APPOINTED AS A SPECIAL

ADVISOR TO COS MELGAR. AS FAR AS THE BI-LATERAL MINISTRY TO MINISTRY RELATIONSHIP, THEREFORE, HE WAS QUITE OPTIMISTIC.

3. BORGONOVO SAID THAT NOTWITHSTANDING THIS POSITIVE ASPECT,
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HE FEELS THAT GIVEN THE UNCERTAINTIES AND PROBLEMS THAT CONFRONT

THE NEW GOH, AND THE IMPRESSION HE HAS THAT IT IS THE SUPREME MILITARY COUNCIL RATHER THAN THE CABINET THAT WILL BE CALLING THE SHOTS, IT WILL REMAIN UNCLEAR FOR SOME TIME AS TO WHO IN THIS COLLEGIAL SETTING HAS THE REAL DECISION-MAKING AUTHORITY. ALL OF THIS CONTRIBUTES TO A CORRESPONDING UNCERTAINTY WITHIN THE GOES. BORGONOVO SAID THAT HE AND HIS GOVERNMENT MUST KNOW BOTH WHO IS MAKING THE DECISIONS IN THE GOH, AS WELL AS WHAT THOSE PERSONS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE DISPUTE ARE. HE SAID THAT THE ACQUISITION OF THIS DATA WILL TAKE TIME. EVEN WHEN NEGOTIATIONS GET GOING AGAIN, HE WOULD EXPECT THAT THEY WILL HAVE TO GO OVER A LOT OF OLD GROUND, SINCE THE GOES WILL WANT TO HEAR THE NEW GOH NEGOTIATORS RESTATE THE COMMITMENTS AND ASSUMPTIONS ARRIVED AT PREVIOUSLY, TO BE SURE THEY STILL HOLD.

4. BORGONOVO ADDED THAT THE FACT THE MELGAR WILL NOT HOLD THE CHIEF OF THE ARMED FORCES JOB AS WELL AS BEING CHIEF OF STATE MAKES HIM WEAKER THAN LOPEZ. THE MINISTER SAID HE CONSIDERS THE CHIEF OF THE ARMED FORCES JOB THE MORE IMPORTANT OF THE TWO.

5. ASKED IF HE INTENDS TO TAKE ANY INITIATIVE IN MAKING A REPORT TO COMPLY WITH THE OAS COMMITTEE OF SEVEN'S OUTSTANDING REQUEST FOR A BILATERAL STATUS REPORT, BORGONOVO SAID HE WAS DISINCLINED TO PRESENT SUCH A REPORT GIVEN THE UNCERTAINTIES IN HONDURAS. HE SAID HE WAS CERTAIN HIS HONDURAN COUNTERPART WOULD BE UNABLE TO PRESENT A DEFINITIVE POSITION AT THIS EARLY DATE, AND THAT HE, BORGONOVO, WOULD ASK THE COMMITTEE TO HOLD ITS REQUEST IN ABEYANCE.

6. THE AMBASSADOR ASKED BORGONOVO WHAT HE THOUGHT MIGHT BE THE EXTENT OF THE TWO MILITARIES PARTICIPATION IN THE BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS FROM HERE ON IN. THE MINISTER SAID HE UNDERSTOOD MELGAR AND SALVADORAN CHIEF OF STAFF RODRIGUEZ HAD BEEN CLASSMATES TOGETHER FOR SOME SIX MONTHS (UNSPECIFIED WHERE OR WHEN). BORGONOVO SAID THAT INsofar AS HE IS AWARE, AND HE ADMITTED HE MIGHT NOT BE IN ON ALL THAT IS GOING ON BETWEEN THE MILITARIES, THE RECENT BORDER MEETINGS WERE HELD TO GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER AND WORK OUT PROCEDURES TO MINIMIZE THE RISK OF BORDER INCIDENTS.

7. THE AMBASSADOR SUGGESTED THAT WITH THE TWO MILITARIES GETTING CONFIDENTIAL

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ALONG SO WELL IN THESE MEETINGS, IT MIGHT BE USEFUL TO EMPLOY THIS MECHANISM TO TRY AND BREAK THE SIX YEAR IMPASS BY GETTING THEM TO DISCUSS THE REESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS AS A "FIRST STEP."

BORGONOVO SAID HE RECOGNIZES THAT THE HONDURAN MILITARY IS IN PROCESS OF INSTITUTIONALIZING ITS ROLE IN GOH, AND HE COULD HARDLY DENY THE USEFULNESS OF THE MILITARY AS A VALUABLE CHANNEL OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS. NOTWITHSTANDING THIS

ADMISSION, BORGONOVO LEFT NO DOUBT THAT HE CONSIDERS THE ISSUE TO BE FOREIGN MINISTRY BUSINESS. HE INDICATED DOUBT THAT THE MILITARIES HAVE THE CAPACITY TO SOLVE THE TOTAL PROBLEM, BUT HE HOUGHT THEY MIGHT USEFULLY BE GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE MORE ACTIVELY. HE THEN PARRIED THE AMBASSADOR'S SUGGESTION WITH A COUNTER PROPOSAL, THAT THE TWO CHIEFS OF STATE, BE ENCOURAGED TO GET IN DIRECT PERSONAL CONTACT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, BEFORE THE LOWER LEVELS DO ANYTHING, TO REESTABLISH THE FAVORABLE ATMOSPHERE THAT MOLINA AND LOPEZ HAD BEFORE THE LATTAR'S FALL.

8. BORGONOVO THEN GAVE SOME BACKGROUND ON THE STORY THAT CIRCULATED IN LOPEZ' LAST WEEKS ABOUT "THE IMMINENT REESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS." HE SAID THAT DURING A PRE-EASTER TELEPHONE CONVERSATION, INITIATEL BY LOPEZ TO INFORM MOLINA OF THE GOH AIRCRAFT PURCHASE, LOPEZ PROMISED TO CALL MOLINA AGAIN AFTER EASTER. ASKED IF HE BELIEVED LOPEZ WAS READY TO ANNOUNCE HIS WILLINGNESS TO REESTABLISH RELATIONS AT THE TIME OF THE PROPOSED POST-EASTER CALL, BORGONOVO SAID NO. THE SECOND CALL WOULD HAVE BEEN TO AGREE ON A MEETING DATE TO DISCUSS THE DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS ISSUE. EVENTS IN HONDURAS OVERCAME LOPEZ AND THE SECOND CALL WASN'T MADE.

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